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ABSTRACT

A description is presented of the staff development program at Santa Monica College (California). Introductory comments describe the program goals of improving educational quality; providing all staff members with opportunities to develop; fostering professional variety; providing opportunities for discussion of indigenous problems; exploring new ideas; and orienting faculty. The bulk of the report consists of descriptions of the following program activities: (1) Project Synergy, which was initiated in July, 1985, to coordinate professional development activities, explore retraining opportunities, make recommendations, and develop a 5-year plan for staff development at the college; (2) the New Faculty Orientation and Mentor Program; (3) the Developing College Leadership Project, in which 10 women who exhibited leadership qualities were chosen to participate in a year-long project to strengthen their leadership skills; (4) the Computer Literacy Program; (5) the Tri-State Institute for Professional Development, which brought together community colleges in Arizona, California, and Hawaii to share staff development ideas and resources, develop cooperative staff development projects, facilitate faculty exchanges, build a network of staff development offices, and draft policy; and (6) professional development leaves. Finally, program results are reviewed. (LAL)

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STAFF DEVELOPMENT AT SANTA MONICA COLLEGE

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JC 860 151

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INTRODUCTION

The college staff, certificated and classified, represents its most significant investment of resources and might well be viewed as the single greatest asset of a college. Providing an institutionally integrated and action-oriented staff development program is a high priority.

The goals of the program have been developed by the representatives of all the various employees. The program encompasses instructional, organizational, and personal development. Program implementation is comprehensive, dynamic and regularly evaluated to insure effectiveness.

The purposes of the staff development program at Santa Monica College reflect the common perceptions of development research and include several recently developed innovative aspects unique to Santa Monica College. The staff development program is designed to:

- Improve the quality of educational services provided to students;
- Provide all staff members opportunities to change and develop as the college curriculum and services change;
- Foster professional variety and personal growth for all staff members;
- Provide opportunities for discussion and eventual resolution of indigenous problems;
- Explore and encourage utilization of new ideas and methods of enhancing the educational process;
- Orient new staff members and reorient experienced members to new philosophies.

The unique collegiate environment at Santa Monica College provides the stimulus for a comprehensive development program to evolve. A two-and-a-half day college-wide symposium held in 1982 provided the first stimulus for developing a total staff development program. This began the major change in staff development described herein. Change is not only welcomed but expected by all levels of the college community. Collective bargaining concerns, which often overlap with staff development activities, are creatively coordinated with program implementation. Most significantly, all employee groups are willing to meet together in an environment of mutual respect and work together for the common good and improvement of the student educational experience and staff members' personal growth.

The Staff Development Program at Santa Monica College offers a variety of workshops, forums, recreation programs and retreats enhanced by the six major projects described on the following pages. These six projects have provided a coordinated approach to meeting the goals stated above.

PROJECT SYNERGY
A STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE

Project Synergy has been established in recognition of the need of professionals to plan for change. Planning for change within a labor-intensive educational institution must focus on employees whose skills, aspirations, satisfactions and engagements with their work profoundly affect educational quality.

There have been revolutionary changes in needs for new skills and "competences" by the college's faculty, staff and students. Simultaneously, legislative actions responding to financial, social and political demands have created a need for colleges to improve their quality while being more productive and efficient at serving students.

The name "Synergy" was specifically selected to reflect the philosophy that employees representing different segments of the college can work together to create a whole that is greater than the sum of each individual's contribution.

Project Synergy was created at Santa Monica College in July, 1985, to accomplish the following goals:

- To serve as a clearinghouse to coordinate on-going professional development activities for faculty, staff and management.
- To explore opportunities for renewing, revitalizing, and retraining faculty, staff and management.
- To recommend ideas, programs or activities to the appropriate college personnel or committees.
- To develop a five-year plan for staff development at Santa Monica College.

The Steering Committee consists of two members representing the faculty Professional Development Committee, two members representing classified employees, two members representing the Management Association and the Dean of Instructional Services.

NEW FACULTY ORIENTATION AND MENTOR PROGRAM

Santa Monica College is dedicated to converting part-time faculty positions to full-time ones. Since fall 1984, the college has hired 50 new faculty and long-term substitutes. This represents a staff turnover of 22 percent. The impact of this change on the college has been mitigated by a strong, innovative orientation program that provides an on-going support system for new faculty.

Orientation begins with two days of meetings before classes begin. These meetings cover the major areas of the college that a new faculty member needs to become familiar with to be effective. The presentation includes:

The instructional program
Admissions and records
Personnel policies
Instructional services
Student services
Faculty organizations

A faculty orientation handbook is provided to supplement the presentations. Information is easily found in this book, which has the college philosophy and sample forms to update and record student progress. A catalog, student handbook, schedule of classes and other materials important to new faculty are distributed.

During the second day, each new faculty member is assigned to a mentor who will provide support to the instructor during the first year. The mentors are experienced faculty who have served as Academic Senate presidents and volunteered to mentor up to four new instructors. They have agreed to meet with the new faculty regularly throughout the year and help initiate them to the college community.

The cost of this program is minimal. According to the collective bargaining agreement, inviting the new faculty and mentors to come back two days early requires compensation; therefore, each faculty member participating in this project receives a $50 per day honorarium. The handbooks cost about 80 cents each.

DEVELOPING COLLEGE LEADERSHIP

Ten women who exhibited leadership qualities at Santa Monica College were chosen to participate in a year-long project to strengthen their already good leadership skills. The group consisted of six faculty members, one classified manager and three certificated administrators. Before attending a week-long statewide leadership conference, sponsored by the California Association of Community Colleges, each participant identified a project and mentor administrator to work with for the year. Rather than sending one representative, the college administrators agreed to an experiment, to nominate ten SMC women if the conference would accept them all. Toward the end of the conference, college staff development personnel joined the ten women for an interview day of support and listening.

The "group" was encouraged, when they returned, to form a support network and meet regularly. The project ends January 1, 1986; however, at this time most goals of the project have been met.

The cost of this project consisted of the funds necessary to release the staff members one week at the leadership conference and the expenses associated with conference attendance. The mentors and participants receive no compensation for the individual projects. The administrators in some cases were provided with assistance on current projects.

The ten projects include:

- Development of a model placement process for vocational program completers. The interior design program will be utilized as the pilot program.
- Assessment of impact of management abilities and leadership styles on the community college governance process.
- Assessment of the effect of the 1985 Leadership Program upon the ten individual faculty participants and the effect of their projects upon Santa Monica College.
- Ascertain the relevant variables in the maintenance and improvement of faculty morale through the examination and experimentation of different factors within two departments on campus.
- Examine the articulation issues, in the broadest definition, between feeder high schools and a community college through the study of articulation relationships between Santa Monica High School and Santa Monica College.
- Organize a major fund raising campaign which solicits scholarship donations to the Santa Monica College Foundation.
- Establishment of a professional arts program which satisfies the vocational goals of fine arts students, provides training to selected students attempting to become professional artists and integrates the fine and applied arts into an interdisciplinary program.
- Explore the organization and personnel interaction of public information offices at eight selected community colleges.
- Isolate the relevant variables necessary to integrate the instructional efforts of the day and evening program through the utilization of different methodologies in two departments.
- Create a fee-supporting institute at Santa Monica College which satisfies the continuing education needs of professionals within the community. In addition, said institute will develop a model which utilizes the community service mechanism and generates revenue for both the college general fund and the sponsoring department.

COMPUTER LITERACY

Santa Monica College has a long history of encouraging staff members to develop the ability to interact with computers. Data processing faculty members have been given reassigned time assignments to provide introductory courses, workshops and forums to familiarize staff members with computer operations. During the fall 1984 semester, ten Compaque computers with printers and associated software were purchased. Each computer set-up was then assigned to a staff member for a semester or summer session. So far there has been enough faculty interest to assign the computers through the next 12 months (three additional "rounds" of rotation).

Staff members who receive a computer are asked to provide an informal assessment of how they used the computer. No formal project or outcomes are expected. When the computers are picked up, a short introductory lesson is provided by the instructional data processing staff and ongoing support is available on an individual basis. Faculty recipients of computers are urged to take the computer home, to have their peers "play with the computer" and to enjoy exploring—not document/rational usefulness.

In addition, an administrative computer users group has been established. The objective is to instruct each other on the group's potential uses of the college computer. Twenty-seven staff members have been involved with this group. The major outcome has been to create public files in the computer data banks explaining technical functions of the machine. The drawback is the unavailability of printers.

The current emphasis is to provide staff members the ability to purchase quality computer hardware and software at a very competitive price on campus. By Dec. 1, 1985, the project will be serving the needs of staff members who desire to buy their own equipment.

The major cost of this project has been the cost of the ten computer systems, each costing about $2,500. So far, the maintenance and repair of these machines has been minimal. The second significant cost is the release time provided to classified staff to participate in the administrative computer users group.

TRI-STATE INSTITUTE FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

At Santa Monica College's initiation, several community colleges in Arizona, California and Hawaii have formed an association to:

- Share staff development ideas and resources;
- Develop cooperative staff development projects;
- Facilitate staff exchanges;
- Build a network of staff development offices based on mutual trust and understanding;
- Draft policy related to staff development.

There are 20 colleges in the group of which five are located in California. The current efforts focus on increasing the number of staff exchanges we are able to facilitate. All colleges have agreed that exchanges should include both certificated and classified staff. Surveys are being conducted on each campus to identify potential exchange partners. In the near future, the group is planning to meet together to accomplish more of the stated goals.

There have been no major costs to this program so far. Conference calls and postage in addition to administrative time have been minimal.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEAVES

Traditionally, Santa Monica College has been committed to providing faculty the opportunity to leave the classroom to refresh skills and develop new instructional methods.

Sabbatical leaves have been granted to allow faculty to take semester or year-long leaves to rejuvenate themselves and allow for extended research projects. The college has granted ten semesters (maximum allowed) for three of the past five years. In 1982 and 1983, state-level financial constraints reduced the number to two semesters. Project proposals are developed by the faculty member, reviewed by a joint faculty administration committee for ranking in priority order and submitted to the Superintendent/President for recommendation to the Board of Trustees. The cost of each sabbatical leave averages $12,000 per semester.

Fellowships are granted to full-time faculty members to improve instruction by developing new curriculum, innovative instructional methods and educational activities. The joint faculty administration committee has a budget of $9,000 per year to award to faculty projects. These awards can be in the form of reassigned time or cash grants.

RESULTS

The 1984-85 staff development program directly affected 110 (approximately 50 percent) certificated faculty members. This represents a 75 percent increase in the faculty members involved in staff development projects. In addition to certificated increases, greater numbers of classified staff have been involved in specific projects than ever before.

Improving the quality of educational services to students at Santa Monica College is the overall goal of the staff development program. All staff members are provided the opportunity to change in response to changing curriculum through the Professional Development leaves, the Tri-State Institute activities, and Project Synergy. Professional variety is encouraged by fostering exchanges and the future exploration of career development including the leadership development project. Personal growth is fostered through educational workshops and forums. A recreation program is available to increase fitness and will be addressed as an overall wellness plan being developed as part of Project Synergy.

New methods for both certificated and classified staff such as the computer literacy program allows utilization of new ideas and methods. A strong orientation program ensures the continuance of a high quality program at Santa Monica College. Retreats to off-campus locations with small groups of staff members have provided the environment necessary to discuss and resolve indigenous problems.

Project evaluations, which have been conducted, are uniformly positive regarding program objectives and are providing significant input for future improvements.

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